



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

15 May 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Our Easter celebrations were unusual this year. While many participated in live-streamed celebrations of the Easter Triduum and Easter Masses, it was not the celebration it would have been with the assembled people of God together to welcome the newly baptized. In fact, we continue to wait with and pray for the Elect and those who have prepared to come into the Church, but have not yet done so because of the pandemic.

I know how much people of faith are hungering for the Eucharist and I rejoice that we will be able to celebrate mass with the participation of some of the people of God present very soon. However, I do not want anyone to mistake the resumption of public masses as a sign that the Covid-19 pandemic is over, because it is not.

On May 20 the governor of Kentucky will allow churches to open for worship and on that date I am ending the prohibition of the public celebration of Mass. All of the churches are working to implement the directives that need to be in place to resume public worship. Many churches across the diocese will resume masses by the weekend of May 23-24. Churches in Lexington, Ashland, Campton, Hazard, Jackson, Lawrenceburg, Morehead, Mt. Sterling, Owingsville, Richmond and Winchester will begin celebrating public masses on Pentecost, the weekend of May 30-31.

Please note that this is not simply a return to how we celebrated before the outbreak of the pandemic. Churches will only be able to admit 33% of the occupancy of the building and social distancing will need to be maintained at all times. That means that on the first weekend when we return to mass, not everyone will be able to attend. Please check with your parish to find out what procedures will be used for admission to mass. We continue to strongly encourage the elderly and those in any way more vulnerable to the virus to continue to participate in live-streamed masses. People who are sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms have a responsibility to stay home and not come to mass. Parishes may have to change their usual weekend schedule and should offer options to attend mass during the week as well.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday mass remains intact until further notice, no one should feel it is necessary to risk their own health or the health of others to attend mass at this time.

Peace and all good,

+ John Stowe, OFM Conv.

Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Lexington